



**Public Hearing Testimony
of Glenn Marshall, Commissioner Department of Labor
Labor and Public Employees Committee
March 8, 2012**

Good Afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski, Senator Guglielmo, Representative Rigby and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with testimony regarding ***House Bill #5232 AAC Concerning Hearings before the Administrator and the Employment Security Appeals Division under the Unemployment Compensation Act..*** My name is Glenn Marshall and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Labor.

I am here to speak in support of House Bill# 5232 because it will improve my Department's efficiency while providing essential services to workers and businesses. By law, the Administrator makes an eligibility determination, at a hearing, for unemployment compensation benefits. The hearings may take several forms. In person hearings at the Administrator's fact-finding level are infrequent; however, they tend to be more time consuming. The use of the telephone to conduct the hearings at this level has enabled the Department to streamline its services. The Department has consolidated some of our adjudications offices. Therefore, we are able to assign telephone hearings to those offices that have fewer cases to even out the case load. Looking to the future, the Department would like to streamline its adjudication services further. Such consolidation, streamlining and reassigning of cases would not be possible if the hearings were still held in person. House Bill# 5232 does not take away a person's right to have an in-person hearing. In person hearings will still be held at the discretion of the Administrator.

Currently, appeals from the Administrator's decisions under the Unemployment Compensation Act are heard by Referees in the Appeals Division in proceedings which are conducted throughout the State. In person hearings will still be held in the majority of appeal cases. However, House Bill# 5232 will also permit the Appeals Division to conduct hearings by telephone or other electronic means. Under this proposal, the Appeals Division will also have the flexibility to schedule hearings in other locations if parties do not have the ability to appear in person at a centralized location or by telephone. This too will improve efficiency while providing essential services to workers and businesses.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I am available if you have any questions.